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The Use and Purpose of Three Frequent Syntactical Forms in the Fourth Gospel

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Abstract
This article analyzes three syntactical forms that occur frequently in the Fourth Gospel. These forms are often associated with aspects of the literary style for which John is well known—for example, misunderstanding, irony, doubt, reversal or denial, and division. These categories are not mutually exclusive. In fact, irony, misunderstanding, and reversal might occur in the same context.

Keywords
irony, Gospel of John, unfulfilled condition, doubt, division, question, Jews

Introduction

The Fourth Gospel (FG) uses three quite sophisticated forms of syntax more frequently than one would expect given its otherwise simple Greek. There is an unparalleled concentration in the FG on questions that anticipate either a negative or a positive reply, and on unfulfilled conditions (also called contrary-to-fact or second-class conditions). This high frequency has been missed by many specialists in the field.[1] It is the contention of this essay

[1] It escaped Turner's net (1976, 3:91–93, 4:64–79), and Blass–Debrunner gives no mention of their frequency in the FG (BDF, §360). However, the older work of Edwin A. Abbott does not miss their common occurrence in the FG (1906, 107–8, §2078; 193, §2235).

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that they frequently facilitate the FG's use of literary devices (Wead 1970). Although this usage has been noted with respect to Johannine irony—though hardly exhaustively—it has not been applied to many of the other Johannine literary techniques. In this article I gather together every example of these three syntactical forms and relate them to some of the FG's literary devices and situations.

The first form to be examined is the FG's repeated use of questions expecting a negative response, that is, questions beginning with the particles μή or μήτι.[2] The second form consists of questions that imply an affirmative rejoinder, that is, questions beginning with the particles οὐ, οὐχ, or οὐχι. All the forms of these questions *expect* certain replies, though the actual response of the addressee, whether stated or implied, may be quite the opposite (Robertson 1923, 917). The third form is the large number of unfulfilled conditions found in the FG.[3] These conditional forms indicate that the statement in the protasis did not occur. Since these three syntactical forms facilitate the giving of an implied meaning in contrast to the real situation, they consequently often provide a twist that anyone (implied or real) reading from within the author's dramatic plot would discern.

The frequency of certain key syntactical forms in the FG

The FG has more occurrences of questions expecting a negative reply than the combined total of the Synoptic Gospels (22 times compared with 15 times). In fact the FG contains 31 percent of the New Testament's total usage of this syntax (see Fig. 1). Questions expecting a positive response occur frequently in all the Gospels with the FG having the third highest incidence in the New Testament (19 times or 15 percent of the New Testament's total usage; see Fig. 2). Furthermore, the FG uses unfulfilled conditions more frequently than any other NT book—39 percent of the New Testament's total usage of unfulfilled conditions is found in the FG. Compared with the Synoptics, the FG has 18 occurrences compared to their combined total of 14 (see Fig. 3).[4]

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[2] The particle μήτι often implies a note of hesitancy.

[3] Where the aorist or pluperfect are used in the protasis and the apodosis, unfulfilled conditions will be translated "if you *had* come, he *would have* lived." "The imperfect is temporally ambiguous" (BDF, 182). This is especially true of verbs that lack an aorist form, such as εἰμί and δύναμαι. Generally, however, I shall translate the imperfect as denoting present time (Robertson 1923, 1013).

[4] I used the Gramcord program to research these syntactical forms. The numeral above each bar is the total occurrences.

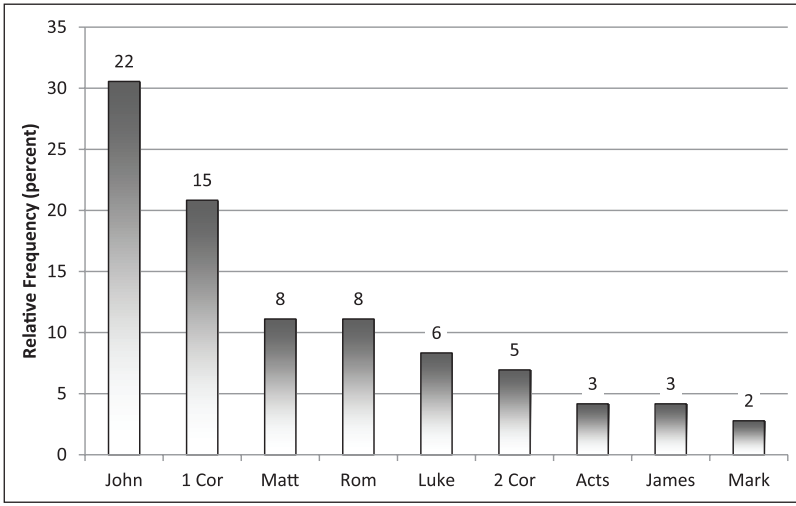

Figure 1. Questions expecting the answer "no" in the New Testament

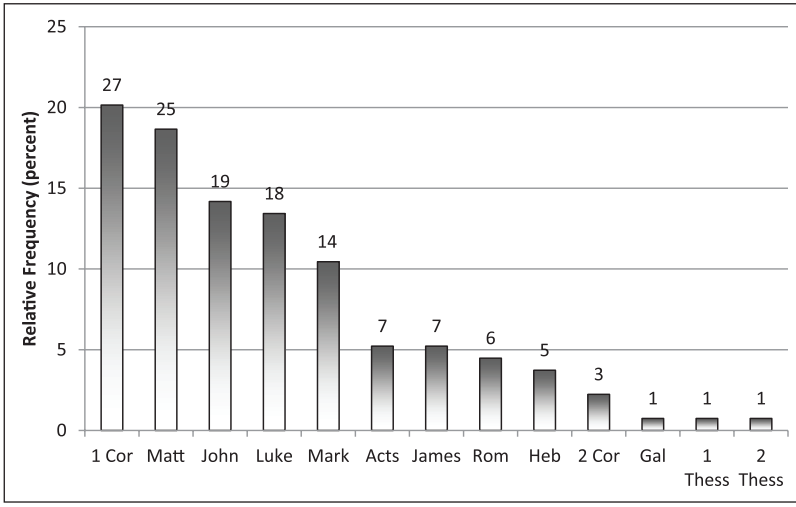

Figure 2. Questions expecting the answer "yes" in the New Testament

An analysis of the syntax in context

In examining the passages in the FG in which questions that expect either a negative or an affirmative answer occur, we find that they frequently also

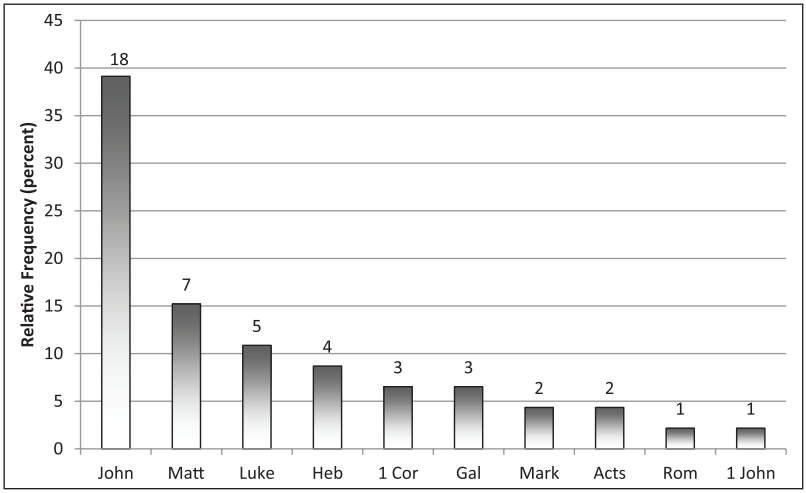

Figure 3. Unfulfilled conditions in the New Testament

contain some ironic, reversed, divisive, or unexpected overtone (that is, to the character in the plot). The same is true of those passages where the FG uses an unfulfilled conditional sentence. These categories are not absolute and several of them often occur in the same context.

A. Misunderstanding

The ability of Greek to indicate the hearer's expected response to a question provides the author with a way to indicate misunderstanding. Nicodemus not unreasonably asks Jesus, "How is a man able to be born when he is old (γέρων)? He is not (μή) able to enter the womb of his mother a second time and be born, is he?" (3.4).[5] The form of Nicodemus's incredulous question indicates that he took ἄνωθεν to mean "again." Armed with the knowledge of 3.12–13, the reader readily discerns the folly of doing that.

When the disciples pressed Jesus to eat, he declined on the basis of his having spiritual sustenance. "Someone has not (μή) brought food for him to eat, have they?" (4.33). The misunderstanding of the disciples is intensified by Jesus' answer to his own question: "You say, don't (οὐχ) you, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting" (4.35). The allusion to evangelism is clear, and it is the woman's testimony that is bringing the Samaritan

[5] Translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

villagers back to the well, while the disciples are left dithering about Jesus' meaning.

When Jesus informed the Jews that where he was going they were unable to go, they responded with a rhetorical reflection full of doubt: "He's not perhaps (μήτι) going to kill himself, since he says, 'Where I'm departing, you are not able to go,' is he?" (8.22).[6] The doubt implicit in the question implies a certain sarcasm. Jesus knew that the path he was treading would lead to his death, but at the hands of others, and not at his own (5.18; 7.1, 19, 20, 25; 8.39, 40; 11.51, 53; 12.33; 18.32, 34).

Another surmises: "He's not (μή) about to go to the scattering among the Greeks to teach the Greeks, is he?" (7.35). The FG strikes an inclusive note from the prologue onwards: "Light of all people" (1.4); "enlightens everyone" (1.9); "all who received him" (1.12); "everyone who believes in him" (3.15, 16; 5.24; 6.40; 11.26; 12.46); "Saviour of the world" (4.42); "I have other sheep" (10.16); "I shall draw all people to myself" (12.32). Hence the Jews' question contained an unintended truth. The syntax requires "no," he's not going among the Greeks, but the reality demands "yes," he is.

Both Martha and Mary express their disappointment at Jesus' absence and their brother's death with the identical unfulfilled condition: "Lord, if you had been (ἦς) here, my brother would not have died (οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν)" (11.21, 32).[7] He was not there, and Lazarus was dead. He is now present, and that augurs endless possibilities, which Martha vaguely senses (11.22), as does the informed reader. The sisters manifest a considerable degree of belief even if their trust does not quite contemplate the raising of their deceased brother. This is clear from Martha's remonstrance in 11.39 that Lazarus was in a state of decomposition.

Some of the Jews again provide the model for unbelief with a critical query that expects a positive confirmation (11.37): "This man [Jesus], who opened the eyes of the blind, was also able to cause this man [Lazarus] not to die, wasn't (οὐκ) he?" The reader responds as per the syntax: "yes, he could have kept Lazarus from dying." Jesus says to Martha (11.40), "I told you that if you believed you would see the glory of God, didn't (οὐκ) I?" This refers presumably to 11.23, but also loosely to 11.4. It is the reader and not Martha who makes this connection. Even so, it is hard to see that the reader would exceed Martha's hope (11.24) and confession (11.27) in either her understanding or her faith.

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[6] "Jews" in the FG refers in the main to the Jerusalem elite's opposition to Jesus.

[7] The imperfect ἦς clearly has the force of an aorist in these unfulfilled conditions.

B. Irony

As Jesus was sitting beside Jacob's well, a Samaritan woman approached him from a nearby village (4.7).[8] Jesus' request for a drink shocks the woman, for he was a Jew while she was a Samaritan (4.9).[9] To underline the situation, the author informs the reader that Jews had no dealings (συγχρῶνται, 4.9) with Samaritans. Other than discerning that Jesus was a Jew, the woman knew nothing about him. Jesus reminds the Samaritan woman of her ignorance by challenging her with an unfulfilled conditional statement: "If you had known (ᾔδεις) the gift of God and who it is who says to you 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked (ἂν ᾔτησας) him and he would have given (ἔδωκεν ἄν) living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν) to you" (4.10). The condition is unfulfilled; she neither knows the gift of God nor who Jesus is, and hence she asks nothing of him. Water and Spirit have already been associated in 1.33 and 3.5, so the reader knows that Jesus is speaking of the Spirit. Later, in 7.37–39, the meaning is made plain when the author explains that the "rivers of living water" are the Spirit that believers in Jesus were to receive (Marcus 1998, 328–30).

The unfulfilled condition ironically makes Jesus rather than the woman the giver ("he would have given to you living water," 4.10c). The reader already knows that Jesus is the "Giver" (1.12; 3.3), but the woman does not know this. Indeed, the woman is incredulous, since it would appear to be a rash promise because Jesus had no bucket and the well was deep (at least thirty meters or 100 feet). She responds with a question: "you are not (μή) greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well from which he, his children, and his flocks drank, are you?" (4.12). The woman's question reflects her ignorance of Jesus' person—"if you had known who . . . but you don't"—for she expects him to deny any superiority over Jacob.[10]

The Samaritan woman confronts Jesus the Jew with her claim of Jacobean paternity and ownership of the well ("*Our* father Jacob who gave *to us* the well"). Hence the woman implicitly asks Jesus whether he was the expected Prophet (Samaritan *Taheb*) like Moses. The syntax of the woman's

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[8] Irony is widespread in the FG. I have chosen the following three episodes because of the frequency of its occurrence in these passages. For irony, see Culpepper 1983; Duke 1985.

[9] The first participle is causal or concessive (σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν) and the second may also be a causal genitive absolute (γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης;): "How do you, since you are a Jew, ask of me to drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?" (4.9).

[10] "Aber der Leser und Hörer des Johannesevangeliums weiß es längst: die Frau kann Jesus ja gar nicht verstehen, weil sie nicht wiedergeboren ist" (But the readers and hearers of John's Gospel already know this: the woman does not understand Jesus because she has not been born again; Schulz 1975, 75).

question expects the answer, "no, I'm not greater than Jacob, and no I'm not the prophet like Moses." But of course, he is greater; and the inside reader knows he is. Furthermore, Jesus' response to the woman demonstrates that he knew that he was greater than Jacob or Moses (1.17).

The vulnerability of the woman's seemingly superior position (Jesus asks her for water, she has the bucket, and Jacob is her forefather) is exposed by her ignorance of Jesus' identity. The same challenge is made again in 8.53: "you are not (μή) greater than our father Abraham, who died, are you?" This was the Jews' skeptical response to Jesus' claim that those who kept his word would not see (taste) death for ever (8.51–52). Since Jesus has life in himself (1.4; 5.26), despite the Jews' disbelief, the reader knows that he is indeed greater than the mortal Abraham and the prophets.

When the Jews asked the formerly blind man for the second time to explain how he received back his sight, he inquired of them with scarcely concealed irony. "I have told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You are not (μή) wanting to become one of his disciples, are you?" (9.27). "By pretending that he believes them really to be in earnest, he treats the insincerity of the inquiry with the greatest possible irony" (Bultmann 1971, 336). He immediately receives his expected negative reply: "Then they hurled insults (λοιδορέω) at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple!' We are disciples of Moses!" (9.28).

With a sagacity born of innocence he notes, "if this man were (ἦν) not from God, he would not [now] be able (ἠδύνατο) to do anything [regarding blindness]" (9.33). The unfulfilled condition testifies that Jesus is from God, which affirms what the Pharisees deny (9.16). Incensed that one born in sin would deign to instruct them, they carried out the threat the parents feared—they cast him out (9.34). His belief in Jesus led to rejection from the synagogue (9.22), but ironically his expulsion led to his belief (9.35–38).

Another passage in the FG that bristles with irony is the exchange between Pilate and Jesus during the latter's trial. Rensberger goes so far as to suggest that Pilate's "statements are all ironic taunts, as he proceeds to use Jesus to make a ridiculous example of Jewish nationalism" (Rensberger 1984, 404). His interrogation is disdainful and sarcastic, yet for the reader, at another level, his queries are genuine and capable of leading to the truth. Pilate asks the Jews (18.29b), "What charge are you bringing against this man?" They reply with an unfulfilled condition that defends their action without giving a reason for it: "If this man were not presently doing (ἦν . . . ποιῶν) evil, we would not have handed (ἄν . . . παρεδώκαμεν) him over

to you" (18.30).[11] Pilate's question is unanswered; no charge is brought, because, as the inside reader knows, none exists.

Pilate does not know this and naturally sees the whole situation in Jewish terms ("judge him according to your law" and "your nation" [τὸ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν], 18.31, 35). Jesus apprises Pilate of the nonpolitical and nonracial nature of his kingdom with yet another unfulfilled condition: "If my kingdom were (ἦν) from this world, my servants would now be fighting (ἠγωνίζοντο [ἄν]), lest I be handed over to the Jews" (18.36b). Given Pilate's political position, his next question, which relates to 18.33 and 36 and expects an affirmative reply, must be considered a jest (18.37a, cf. 18.39; 19.3, 19–22): "Then you are a king, aren't (οὐκοῦν) you?"[12] The irony of it is that in Johannine terms the statement is true. Hence Jesus' response, though veiled (σὺ λέγεις), is affirmative (18.37b; Bultmann 1971, 654 n. 6).

In contrast to the Synoptics, where Jesus is generally silent before Pilate (and Herod), the FG portrays him as interactive. However, in 19.9c, the FG reflects the Synoptics (Matt 27.14; Mark 15.4–5; Luke 23.9) and has Jesus cease to answer Pilate. Understandably, therefore, this rare silence evokes Pilate's slightly mocking enquiry (19.10a): "You are [still] speaking to me, aren't (οὐ) you?" Pilate then adds the reminder (19.10b), "You do know, don't you (οὐκ), that I have the power (ἐξουσίαν) to release you, and I have the power (ἐξουσίαν) to crucify you?" The author then uses another unfulfilled condition to give Jesus' response to Pilate's boast and therewith significantly qualifies the nature of his power: "If it had not been granted (ἦν δεδομένον) to you from above, you would at this time have (εἶχες) no power (ἐξουσίαν) against me" (19.11a).[13]

Jesus concludes (διά τοῦτο, 19.11b) from the dependent nature of Pilate's power that the greater sin belongs to the one who handed him over (ὁ παραδούς). Pilate is not hereby exonerated for "he handed (παρέδωκεν) him over to them to be crucified" (19.16). Just who has the greater sin is somewhat ambiguous. If the singular form is meant literally, then either Judas Iscariot or Caiaphas could be intended. If the singular is used more loosely, it could refer to the Jews and the chief priests, as the same verb is used of their action (παραδίδωμι, 18.30, 35). However, the person most

[11] The imperfect periphrastic reading (ἦν . . . ποιῶν) is most likely the correct text (see Metzger 1994, 216; Omanson 2006, 208. It emphasizes Jesus' continuous and current doing of evil. The aorist in the apodosis records the finality and completion of the Jews' action.

[12] Οὐκοῦν occurs only here in the Greek Bible. It expects an affirmative reply. See Abbott 1906, 192–93 §2234; Robertson 1923, 917.

[13] Besides here, periphrastic pluperfects are reasonably common in the FG (1.24; 3.24; 12.16; 13.5; 18.25; 19.19, 20, 41). The antecedent is not the feminine ἐξουσία, so the neuter (ἦν δεδομένον) refers to Pilate's role in general (cf. 19.19, 20).

qualified for the title ὁ παραδούς is Judas (or Satan)—nine of the seventeen occurrences of this verb in the FG refer to Judas (6.64, 71; 12.4; 13.2, 11, 21; 18.2, 5; 21.20). Yet Caiaphas is the figure that is immediately in focus, for he actually sent Jesus to Pilate. This interpretation finds some support in the minor reading of the singular "priest" (ἀρχιερεύς) in 18.35. Perhaps this is another example of John's clever use of ambiguity.

C. Doubt

The interrogative particle μήτι occurs seventeen times in the New Testament and three of these (18 percent) are in the FG. With μήτι the questioner anticipates a negative reply, but is uncertain as to how the questioned person(s) will answer. An excellent example of the subtle nuance of this syntax is Pilate's disdainful response to a question he asked Jesus. When Pilate asked Jesus whether he was the king of the Jews (18.33), Jesus responded by inquiring whether he was asking this out of his own interest or merely repeating the accusation of the Jewish leadership. "I am not (μήτι) a Jew, am I?" (18.35), Pilate contemptuously retorted with the expectation of a negative reply. If μήτι retains its usual hesitant tone here, it would have been said with disdain, as Pilate was clearly not a Jew (Abbott 1906, 541–43, §2702). There is in it a clear note of scorn and irony (Rensberger 1984, 403 n. 31). The reader by now (1.41, 49; 4.25; 12.13, 15) knows that whether Pilate is a Jew or not is irrelevant, since the recognition of Jesus as Messiah (King) is not ethnically specific.[14]

A less problematic example is the Samaritan woman's query to her compatriots. Following Jesus' confession that he was the Messiah (ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι, 4.26), the woman left her water jar at the well and returned to her town to announce that she had met a man who told her everything she had ever done. "Is this not perhaps the Christ?" she queried (μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός; 4.29). The author probably intended the woman's hesitancy, but the reader has no such doubts since Jesus' status as Messiah has been clearly stated (1.17–18, 20, 41; 3.28; 4.26). Was her hesitancy not so much her own, but more to do with the reception she expected from the men (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) of her town to a woman's testimony?

Yet μήτι indicates she expected her countrymen to reject her hesitant proposal as false. A greater obstacle than her gender was Jesus' nationality. Whatever she and her fellow villagers expected the Messiah (*Taheb*) to be, they certainly did not imagine he would be a Jew. The woman's

[14] The frequent general use of the participle πιστεύων/πιστεύοντες often with πᾶς demonstrates the universality of the FG's outlook (1.12; 3.15, 16, 18, 36; 5.24; 6.35, 40, 47; 7.38, 39; 11.25, 26; 12.44, 46; 14.12; 17.20).

vague ἄνθρωπος (4.29) conceals Jesus' ethnic identity; her hesitant μήτι was therefore justified on several counts. She expresses hesitancy and doubt where John requires certainty.

D. Reversal and contrast

The unfulfilled condition in 5.46 contrasts the Jews' claimed adherence to Moses with their rejection of him of whom Moses spoke: "If you believed (ἐπιστεύετε) in Moses, you would [now] believe (ἐπιστεύετε ἄν) in me." The imperfect in both the protasis and the apodosis emphasizes the continuous action and therefore the Jews' present failure to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The irony is that the unfulfilled condition denies the very thing the Jews later in the Gospel claim for themselves, namely, their belief in Moses: "but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from" (9.28–29). Jesus chides the Jews, "Moses gave you the law, didn't (οὐ) he? But none of you is doing the law."[15] To prove the point he adds, "Why are you seeking to kill me?" (7.19). The FG has already informed the reader that Jesus is the one of whom Moses wrote in the law (1.45; cf. 1.17). Hence, for the author, one cannot profess allegiance to Moses and yet deny the claims of Jesus without self-contradiction.

Jesus presents a similar argument (again an unfulfilled condition) in rejoinder to the Jews' claim that Abraham was their father (8.39). "If you were [now] (ἔστε) the children of Abraham," Jesus challenges, "you would be [currently] doing (ἐποιεῖτε) the works of Abraham."[16] Clearly to do the work of Abraham means to believe in Jesus, the one sent from God (8.45–46, 56). Thus for the author, having Abraham as a forefather and accepting the claims (words) of Jesus are inseparable. To have the one is to have the other; hence the fallacy of the Jews' claim. The specific deed that Abraham did not do (Gen 18.1–18), but which the Jews are threatening to do, is kill a spokesperson from God (8.40), which in their case is Jesus. This was recognized (7.25): "Some of those from Jerusalem were saying, 'This is the man

[15] The καί in 7.19b is adversative. This sentence could also be a question (KJV, ASV), which would make it three questions in a row.

[16] The present tense ἔστε in the protasis is unusual (however, see Luke 17.11), hence a group of manuscripts read the more correct ἦτε. Since εἶναι must use the imperfect for both aorist ("had been") and imperfect ("were") tenses in the protasis, the author may have used the present tense rather than the ambiguous imperfect to make sure the reader read a present meaning for the protasis. Robertson (1923, 1015–16) suggests a mixture of a simple (1st-class) and unfulfilled (2nd-class) conditions. The absence of ἄν in the apodosis is frequent in Hellenistic Greek. For this verse, see Metzger 1994, 192–93, and Omanson 2006, 187.

whom they are seeking to kill, isn't (οὐχ) it?'" The question expects "yes" and the reader knows that it is "yes."

The Jews then raised the stakes and claimed God as their Father, and added the insult that they were not born of fornication (8.41). This refers back to the Pharisees' implied slur about Jesus' bastard birth in their earlier question (8.19a): "Where is your father?" The author uses another unfulfilled condition to convey Jesus' refutation: "You know neither me nor my Father. If you had known (ᾔδειτε) me, you would have known (ἄν ᾔδειτε) my Father also" (8.19b). Not knowing the first means they did not know the second. The Jews' claim to divine paternity did not produce the appropriate response to Jesus' person: "If God were (ἦν) your Father, you would have loved (ἠγαπᾶτε ἄν) me" (8.42). The Jews do not love Jesus, for in their opinion he was a Samaritan and had a demon for thinking that they were seeking to kill him (5.18; 7.1, 19–20, 25; 8.37, 40, 44). When Jesus claimed to exist prior to Abraham (8.58), they picked up stones to kill him (8.59), and thus they ironically answered their own query in 7.20 (that is, "who is seeking to kill you?"). Accordingly, some queried, "He certainly won't (οὐ μή) come to the festival, will he?" (11.56). Well yes, he will, but not openly (11.54).

John has Jesus declare in strong terms, "If I had not come (ἦλθον) and spoken (ἐλάλησα) to them, they would not now have (εἴχοσαν) sin, but now they have no pretext for their sin" (15.22). This is then elaborated with a further unfulfilled condition: "If I had not done (ἐποίησα) among them the works which no other has done, they would not now have (εἴχοσαν) sin. But now they have seen me and hated both me and my Father" (15.24). The episode of the healing of the man born blind concludes with the same negative comment (9.41). Jesus' coming into the world was "so that those who do not see might see and so that those who see might become blind" (9.39). The Pharisees react to this with a question that functions, as so often in the FG, on the literal level (9.40): "We are not (μή) blind, are we?"

The syntax indicates that they expected the confirmation, "No, you are not blind."[17] Given the perplexity of the Pharisees (Jews) in 3.10; 8.20, 27, 43; 9.27—to say nothing of Matthew's repeated reference to their blindness (Matt 23.16, 17, 19, 24)—I suspect that most readers would expect Jesus to disagree and assert, "To the contrary, you are profoundly blind." It comes as a surprise, then, that he agrees with the Jews that they are *not* blind.

"If you were (ἦτε) blind," Jesus says, "you would not now have (ἂν εἴχετε) sin" (9.41a). The unfulfilled condition assures them that they are

[17] Wead says, "the μή shows they expect to be told they are blind; they must have been surprised and stunned by the answer" (1970, 67). Surely the μή indicates the very opposite. They supposed Jesus would agree that they were *not* blind.

not blind. Indeed, this is their assessment of themselves. "But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains" (9.41b). Jesus' opponents are secure in the certainty that they know (9.24, 29), and are therefore unable to discern that they do not know. Notwithstanding their claim to be able to see, they are in fact more sightless than the man born blind. Despite their vision, they cannot see that Jesus' works demonstrate that he is from God. Their assurance that they could see (that they had knowledge) has in effect blinded them.

The rich ambiguity of the verb ὑπάγω, with its resonances in the FG of Jesus going to the cross, adds a note of irony as well as poignancy to Jesus' word to the twelve in 6.67. Many of his disciples ceased following him after they heard his "hard saying" about eating his flesh and drinking his blood (6.52–58). Jesus turned to the twelve and asked (6.67), "You don't (μή) wish also to depart (ὑπάγειν), do you?" This was a clear reference to his death and theirs (13.33, 36), but they were not able to follow him immediately. Peter's confession of commitment refers to the group ("we," 6.68–69). This brings the response, "I chose you twelve, didn't (οὐκ) I? But one of you is a devil" (6.70).[18]

Just as the Jews did not love Jesus, the world will not love his followers. "If you were (ἦτε) of the world, the world would now love (ἄν . . . ἐφίλει) its own" (15.19). They were not of the world, but were destined for another place. "If it were not so," Jesus assures the disciples, "I would have told (εἶπον ἄν) you" (14.2).[19] His imminent departure was for the very purpose of making ready a place for them (14.3). Using an unfulfilled condition similar to that addressed to the Pharisees (8.19), Jesus challenges the disciples: "If you had known (ἐγνώκατε) me, you would have known (ἐγνώκειτε ἄν) the Father also" (14.7).[20] That such a challenge was relevant is confirmed by Philip's request in 14.8 ("Lord, show us the Father and it will satisfy us"). "You believe, don't (οὐ) you?" Jesus asks Philip (14.10), "that I am in the

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[18] Note the emphatic ἐγώ and the adversative καί.

[19] The following clause is awkward: ὅτι πορεύομαι ἑτοιμάσαι τόπον ὑμῖν. If the ὅτι (see Metzger 1994, 206, and Omanson 2006, 199–200) is retained, it could introduce either a noun clause ("I would have told you that I am going . . .") or a question ("would I have told you that I am going . . . ?"). Another option is to read ὅτι causally as introducing a new sentence (see NEB, NASB). Given that the condition is unfulfilled ("If it were not so," but it is so), a consecutive ὅτι (Robertson 1923, 1001; BDAG, 732.5c) makes good sense, that is, "there are many rooms in my Father's house . . . consequently I am going to prepare . . ."

[20] The majority of the Editorial Committee of UBS4 preferred the reading γνώσεσθε, but Kurt Aland argued for the reading I have used. The pluperfect makes the sentence an unfulfilled condition (see 8.19) and therefore a challenge, whereas the future tense makes the condition a promise (see Metzger 1994, 207, and Omanson 2006, 200). It should be noted that, excluding 14.7, the FG uses the pluperfect 34 times, which is 40 percent of the New Testament's usage.

Father and the Father is in me?" Yes he does, hence Jesus' frustrated query (14.9c), "How do you say, 'Show to us the Father'?" The right premise did not lead Philip to draw the correct conclusion as to who Jesus was.

The author perplexes the reader by having Jesus challenge the disciples with another unfulfilled condition: "If you had loved (ἠγαπᾶτε) me, you would have rejoiced (ἐχάρητε ἄν) that I am going to the Father" (14.28). The unfulfilled protasis forces the reader (and the disciples) to draw an unexpected conclusion; the disciples did not love Jesus—at least not in a way that understood Jesus' going to the Father via the cross. Peter had claimed that he would follow Jesus even if it meant his death (13.37). However, promises are more easily made than kept. His resistance at Jesus' arrest (18.10) shows his unwillingness for either Jesus or himself to die. Jesus' question affirms his understanding of his destiny (18.11): "I should drink the cup that the Father has given me, shouldn't (οὐ μή) I?"

As the "other disciple" (18.16) led Peter into the courtyard of the high priest's house, the slave girl who supervised the entrance to the house asked Peter (18.17), "You aren't (μή) from the disciples of this man, are you?" Peter responded immediately with the syntactically expected, "No I am not" (18.17b). As Peter stood warming himself by the fire, some of the others with him at the fire asked him again (18.25), "You aren't (μή) from his disciples, are you?" Again the denial was swift and syntactically expected: "No I am not" (18.25c). The third questioner, a slave of the high priest, was apparently in the garden at the time of Jesus' arrest. In fact, he was a relative of the person whose ear Peter had sliced off. Being an eyewitness, the slave's question did not expect a denial, as was the case in the previous two questions (18.26): "I saw you in the garden with him, didn't (οὐκ) I?" The expected "yes" is met again with Peter's strong denial, and then the rooster crowed (18.27). The sequence in the syntax of the questions emphasizes the tension between Peter's previous avowal and his ultimate denial.

Jesus' last question to his disciples sets up his reversal of the disciples' failure to catch a haul of fish (21.5). "Boys, you don't (μή) have any fish, do you?" "No, we don't," they replied. Then on his advice they put their net out on the right side of the boat and caught all they could manage. This led to the beloved disciple's recognition and exclamation, "It's the Lord" (21.7).

E. Division

Twenty-five times the FG uses the aorist participle to describe Jesus as the one whom the Father sent (ὁ πέμψας), and he uses the indicative and participle of ἀποστέλλω with God (Father) as the subject and the Son (Jesus)

as the object seventeen times.[21] On three occasions the author has Jesus declare, "I have come (ἐξῆλθον) from God."[22] Clearly for the author, Jesus is the one who "comes from above" (3.31). The FG's emphasis on Jesus having been sent from the Father causes divisions and gives the disputes over his origin and person a certain ironic twist.

Local knowledge is a hindrance for grasping universal truth (6.42): "This is Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know, isn't (οὐ) it?" Yes indeed, and Jesus concedes that they know his earthly origin (7.27–28), but ironically notes that they have no understanding of his true origin (8.19). Some in Jerusalem, with considerable irony, wondered, "Do the rulers maybe (μήποτε) truly know that Jesus (οὗτος) is the Messiah?" (7.26).[23] The problem with that suggestion is that they know from where Jesus came, but "whenever the Messiah comes no one knows from where he comes" (7.27). "The Messiah doesn't (μή) come out of Galilee, does he (7.41)?" "The scripture said that the Messiah comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, a village where David was, doesn't (οὐ) it?" (7.42). So the suggestion of some in Jerusalem (7.26) is quickly refuted (7.48): "None (μή) of the rulers or Pharisees have believed in him, have they?" Well, perhaps Nicodemus did, for he defends Jesus' right to a fair hearing, and so he is challenged (7.51): "You are not (μή) from Galilee too, are you? Search [the Scripture] and see that no prophet comes from Galilee" (7.52).[24] The fact that Jonah came from Galilee and that Jesus came from Bethlehem are really relevant only for those who think from below; for the author they are trivial details, since he knew that Jesus was from the Father who had sent him (7.29).

Many of the public believed that Jesus was the Messiah and asked: "Whenever the Messiah comes, he won't (μή) do more signs than this man has done, will he?" (7.31). The author's own remarks at the conclusion of his Gospel (20.30–31; 21.25) indicate that the syntactically expected negative reply is the correct one, and that makes the indefinite ὅταν ἔλθῃ passé, since Jesus has performed an abundance of messianic signs. The servants of the high priests and Pharisees return to them empty-handed, having failed to seize Jesus because they were captivated by his words (7.44–46). The

[21] John 4.34; 5.23, 24, 30, 37; 6.38, 39, 44; 7.16, 18, 28, 33; 8.16, 18, 26, 29; 9.4; 12.44, 45, 49; 13.[16], 20; 14.24; 15.21; 16.5 (πέμπω). John 3.17, 34; 5.36, 38; 6.29, 57; 7.29; 8.42; 10.36; 11.42; 17.3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20.21 (ἀποστέλλω). There are twenty-four occurrences for πέμπω if we exclude 13.16.

[22] John 8.42; 13.3 (ἐξῆλθεν); 16.27, cf. 16.30.

[23] The interrogative μήποτε indicates hesitancy (BDAG, 648.3, 4).

[24] The reading ὁ προφήτης (P^{66*}) would save the high priests and Pharisees from a biblical oversight, the reference then being to *the* prophet of Deut 18.15, who, presumably, would arise from anywhere other than Galilee (see also 7.40).

leaders respond (7.47), "You have not (μή) been led astray (πεπλάνησθε) by him too, have you?" Their expectation is that their own representatives would not have been deceived. None of the leaders, who, unlike the crowd, know the law, has succumbed to Jesus' deception (7.48).

As so often in the FG, the healing of the blind man brought division, especially as a result of the words of Jesus that followed it (10.19–21; cf. 7.12, 43). First, the neighbors, who knew the blind beggar, were divided (9.8). Some were sure it was he, and asked their question expecting an affirmative reply (9.8): "This is the man who sat and begged, isn't (οὐχ) it?" But others baulked at the miracle and said that he was simply someone who looked like the blind beggar. Likewise, the Pharisees were divided because, though it was an astounding miracle, it was done on the Sabbath (9.16). This in their eyes breached the Law of Moses. Some doubted because of the unprecedented nature of the healing; others doubted because of the supposed illegality of it.

Many attributed Jesus' power to demon possession: "We rightly say, don't (οὐ) we, that you have a demon?" (8.48; cf. 10.20). Others, however, asked, "A demon is not (μή) able to open the eyes of the blind, is it?" (10.21). And this is a query that takes us back to the blind man's own assertion that it had never been heard that anyone had opened the eyes of someone born blind (9.32). There is no such miracle in the Old Testament, except in hope (Ps 145.8; Isa 29.18; 35.5; 42.7), but in reality blindness was incurable (*Ep Jer* 1.36). Ultimately, the miracle itself is used to condemn Jesus: "This man, who opened the eyes of the blind, was also able to cause this man not to die, wasn't (οὐκ) he?" (11.37). The expected "yes" of the syntax was hardly a sincere belief, yet ironically it is valid, for Jesus was soon to do more than prevent death; by raising Lazarus he was about to overcome it (11.38–44).

Conclusion

It is clear the FG's well-known literary devices cannot be divorced from the author's fondness for certain syntactical forms and their associated inferential particles. Although it is possible to read too much from grammar, it is equally possible to ignore the syntax that facilitates some of the FG's literary devices. This is especially true of the plethora of unfulfilled conditions in the FG, which are seldom noticed even in studies analyzing the author's literary devices. Translators for their part must attempt to preserve the implications in questions that expect a negative or positive reply from the hearers. The same is true for unfulfilled conditions, especially those examples where the imperfect is used in the protasis or the apodosis or in both.

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Abbreviations

ASV	American Standard Version (1901)
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. 1999. *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, and Albert Debrunner. 1961. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated and revised by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
KJV	King James Version (1611)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1995)
NEB	New English Bible (1970)
UBS4	UBS Greek New Testament, 4th ed. (1993)